DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 298 995 JC 880 422

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TITLE Institutional Project Grant: A Report on Research into Writing-Across-the-Curriculum Projects.
INSTITUTION Monroe County Community Coll., Mich.
PUB DATE 20 Apr 87
NOTE 80p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Information Analyses (070)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Community Colleges; *Content Area Writing; *Curriculum Development; Literature Reviews; Models; Program Development; School Surveys; Two Year Colleges; *Writing Across the Curriculum

ABSTRACT

Drawing from information gathered at conferences, through a literature review, telephone interviews with writing directors at all the community colleges in Michigan and several four-year institutions, and a survey of faculty members at Monroe County Community College (MCCC) this report assesses the status of writing-across-the-curriculum (WAC) in community colleges and offers recommendations for implementing a WAC program at MCCC. After parts I and II define WAC in terms of what it is and is not, parts III and IV review the literature on the benefits and drawbacks of four WAC models. Part V looks at the applicability of these models for MCCC, concluding that teacher-centered models would place too great a burden on the faculty and financial resources of the college, but that a writing center model would have potential for long-term success. Parts VI and VII present the results of a survey of MCCC faculty views on student writing, indicating that an overwhelming majority of MCCC students have writing problems in such areas as organization, supporting an idea, coherence, grammar, punctuation, spelling, vocabulary, and proofreading. Parts VIII and IX briefly describe selected WAC programs in Michigan and other parts of the country, and part X looks at the status of WAC in each community college in Michigan. After part XI sets forth five WAC options for MCCC, part XII suggests steps that should be taken if a WAC emphasis were to be implemented at the college. A 33-item bibliography is included. (EJV)

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INSTITUTIONAL PROJECT GRANT

A REPORT ON RESEARCH INTO

WRITING-ACROSS-THE-CURRICULUM PROJECTS

BY

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HUMANITIES DIVISION

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SUBMITTED: APRIL 20, 1987

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PREFACE

A BRIEF LOOK AT THE HISTORY OF THIS PROJECT

Much has been said and written in recent years about the need to improve our students' ability to write clearly and to think critically. About ten years ago a number of programs designed to address weaknesses in writing and critical thinking began appearing across the country. Articles about Writing-Across-the-Curriculum and Writing-to-Learn have now become standard fare in the national publications of nearly every discipline. Because of this national exposure, in May of 1986 the Humanities Department of Monroe County Community College brought together representatives from each division on campus. Faculty and administrators discussed student writing. A number of issues were raised, and members from each division showed an interest in exploring the possibilities of developing a campus-wide approach to improving student writing.

A few weeks later, when the issues were brought before the entire faculty, many expressed an interest in learning more about ways to improve student-writing. But neither faculty nor administrators could find the time to explore the matter in much more depth, so the initiative that had begun in the spring of 1986 went no further until I was given the opportunity to spend the winter semester of 1987 exploring the issues, determining what had been done elsewhere, and developing a proposal for our campus.

This report is the result of that research.

HOW THE RESEARCH HAS BEEN CONDUCTED

During the winter semester of 1987 I read several books and numerous articles devoted to the writing-across-the-curriculum (WAC) movement.

In order to discover how fully the movement has taken hold in our own state, during January of 1987 I spoke on the phone with writing directors at many four-year schools and from every community college in Michigan.

Last month (March 1987) I attended the National Conference on College Composition and Communication in Atlanta, Georgia. That conference had two all-day workshops and twenty separate sessions devoted to Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC).

In addition to attending the Atlanta conference, during February I attended an all-day WAC conference at Henry Ford Community College and another WAC meeting at the Liberal Arts for Development Conference in Lansing.

During March I conducted a survey designed to gauge the attitudes of our own faculty toward student writing. I received a 100% response from our forty-nine full-time teaching faculty. The results of that survey are included in this report.

During the course of my research, I have identified most of the people in this part of the country who have been leading writing-across-the-curriculum workshops during the past few years, and I have spoken with several of them on the phone. At the conference in Atlanta, I met and spoke with several people who have been leading workshops in other parts of the country.

From my meetings, conversations, and reading on the subject, I am confident that I now have a clear picture of what the writing-across-the-curriculum movement is all about, and I have a good understanding of how it is being approached by colleges and universities in Michigan and across the country.

One of the first things I learned during the course of my research is this: By granting me the opportunity to do this research, Monroe County Community College has done something that not every school has had the foresight to do. We are now in the enviable position of considering a wide variety of options, and, if we choose to do so, we can make our next move an informed one. It will not be an easy decision--change is never easy. But even if we decide to make no changes at all, we will have good reasons for making that choice too. For this opportunity we are indebted, of course, to the pioneering efforts of other schools and other scholars across the country.

A NOTE ON THE STYLE OF THIS REPORT:

If you read the entire report, you will undoubtedly notice some points are covered more than once. I am aware that some people may choose to read only one or two sections of this report--and, even more tragically, I realize that most of the population in China will not have the opportunity to read even that much. Nevertheless, since I cannot assume that those reading only the final sections are aware of points covered in earlier sections, I have purposely included a certain amount of redundancy on some of the key issues.

To those sedulous souls who read the entire report, I apologize for these redundancies. To those who read only selected sections, I am delighted you have chosen to read even part of the report, and I hope each section is reasonably self-contained.

WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM (WAC): WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IT IS NOT

I. WHAT WAC IS NOT:

Writing across the curriculum is neither "correctness across the curriculum" nor "grammar across the curriculum."

Its major concern is not with spelling, punctuation, and grammar. To be sure, these are important matters, but teaching correct English will continue to be the primary responsibility of the English composition faculty.

WAC is not an attempt to teach organization forms that may be imposed across the disciplines.

WAC does not mean that we will all be assigning an additional fifteen page research paper or a two-hour essay exam.

WAC is not an attempt to "get tough" with poor writers. (It is, instead, an attempt to use writing to enhance learning for all students, at all levels, in all subjects. Many of the traditional models of learning put students in a passive mode--they do too little speaking and writing. Language plays a key role in learning--not merely to demonstrate what has been learned, but to "drive" the very learning process itself.)

And WAC is most certainly not an attempt to transform content-area instructors into English teachers. English teachers are not asking their colleagues to assume a burden which rightly belongs with the English faculty: providing students with the skills needed to present a carefully edited, polished written product. To make this the goal of every writing assignment is a faulty emphasis, and it is held by far too many people who mistakenly feel that the eradication of error is clearly more important than the

encouragement of expression. WAC encourages teachers to use writing in their courses to serve their own pedagogical ends, not the preconceived notions of writing-teachers' ends.

The intent is not to develop writing courses in the disciplines, but to find ways writing can be incorporated into courses to help students better meet course objectives (Herrington 380).

II. WHAT WAC IS

A recent study done by the American Association for the Advancement of the Humanities reported that "most schools have a powerful hidden curriculum that precludes the development of higher order skills in reading, thinking, and writing" (Drummond 1). The study noted that testing was usually short-answer, true-false, and multiple-choice. In short, writing was most often viewed as an end, not as a means, of learning.

However, the international movement known as "writing across the curriculum" has promoted a different view--that language is a tool for learning in all fields. The movement is generally given the birth year 1975, when England's James Britton and colleagues published the Bullock Report. A cardinal principle of this report is as follows: "When we choose our own language to explore or rehearse concepts, we are engaged in a more profound kind of learning than when we are passive--listeners only, or parrots only of other people's words." Britton urges teachers to view knowledge and learning as a process: and language, particularly writing, as a catalyst promoting that process (Drummond 1).

"WAC programs are appearing in reaction against the dominant view of language in schools, namely, that language has only one function--to inform--and that the only language activity useful to education is the finished report or essay" (Freisinger 3).

In fact, language for learning is different from language for informing. Writing is particularly critical to idea formation. "We reject the Think/Write model that reduces writing to the status of stenography, of simple transcription of the mind's fully formed concepts" (Freisinger 4).

Research overwhelmingly supports the conclusion that writing--the way we process our ideas, the way they are formed and re-formed as we struggle to make sense of them--is inseparable from thinking. "Students who use their language abilities to explore ideas, synthesize, and communicate are actually learning the subject matter more fully. When writing becomes 'business as usual' in courses throughout the college, thinking and learning--and, incidentally, the writing itself--will improve" (Raimes 799).

Janet Emig of Rutgers University argues strongly that higher cognitive functions seem to develop most fully **only** with the support of verbal language. She states the single most powerful rational for using writing in all courses, no matter what the discipline: "Writing represents a **unique** mode of learning--not merely valuable, not merely special, but **unique**" (122).

The act of writing, according to Emig, allows the writer to manipulate thought in unique ways because writing makes our thoughts visible and concrete and allows us to interact and modify them. "Writing one word, one sentence, one paragraph suggests still other words, sentences, and paragraphs" (Fulwiler, Teaching with Writing 5).

Research in American and English schools has shown that most school writing is only for evaluative purposes--to measure what students know or do not know. "Such writing does not help students to grow in writing skills. Students writing for evaluative purposes are not likely to take risks with their use of language or their own ideas. . . . The value of writing in any course should lie in its power to enable the discovery of knowledge" (Robinson 2).

The writing-to-learn approach forces students to participate actively in learning and to assume responsibility for their learning, rather than to learn passively and to place responsibility for their learning on their teachers. Most importantly, when students come to see writing as an essential part of their learning, they may thus be motivated to look upon the skills taught in English class as important, rather than something to be "endured" and quickly forgotten (Robinson 2).

Writing is seen as a means to improve education across the curriculum: ". . . proponents of content writing agree that papers written in the disciplines will result in students knowing more and knowing better than they do without writing. The student who writes . . . will know more about the discipline than the one who answers multiple-choice tests" (Tchudi 16).

The emphasis throughout the literature is on dramatizing the value of writing as a way to learn. "The stress is not so much on what a written product does for an audience as on what the writing process does for a writer. Writing is treated as a tool of inquiry, a means of focusing and developing thought" (Graham 16).

Thus the backbone of the WAC movement is this: **Writers use language to make meaning. Writing is learning.**

"Skilled writers testify that they often use writing as a tool for thinking, that they do not know what they want to say until they see it before them on the page" (Walvoord and Smith 5). The idea that writing is merely the transcription of already formulated thought is unacceptable. A quote that has been attributed to several famous writers seems to sum it up best: "How do I know what I think, until I see what I say?"

Psychologists (Bruner, Piaget, Ryle, Vygotsky) have provided valuable insights into the relationship between writing and thinking. All have demonstrated that verbalizing is an integral part of thinking. Verbalization,

especially writing, helps people to operate at the higher levels of abstraction. Writing has been shown to correspond to learning in four important ways: 1) Learning is multifaceted, as is writing--which uses eye, mind, hand, and right and left brain. 2) Learning profits from self-provided feedback--the kind available in writing, where the product takes gradual shape before the writer's eyes and is then available for review and reflection. 3) Learning serves an analytical and connective function, as does writing, which organizes individual facts, images, and symbols into sentences, paragraphs, and essays. 4) Finally, at its best, learning is engaged, committed, and self-rhythmed, as the best writing is. "A final implication is that there is a physical, tactile element in learning which educators ignore at their peril" (Walvord and Smith 5).

> Writing progresses as an act of discovery--and furthermore . . . no other thinking process helps us develop a line of inquiry or a mode of thought as completely. Scientists, artists, mathematicians, lawyers, engineers--all 'think' with pen to paper, chalk to blackboard, hands on terminal keys. For most of us, developed thinking is seldom possible any other way. . . . Sartre quit writing when he lost his sight because he couldn't see words, the symbols of thought: he needed to visualize thought to compose, manipulate, and develop it. (Fulwiler, Teaching with Writing 5-6)

Educators in all disciplines can benefit from seeing that **writing is a method of learning** as well as a method of demonstrating what has been learned.

J. Z. Young, British biologist, relates his own discovery of this principle as he prepared to deliver a series of lectures related to his work in progress on the brain:

Frankly I did not consider that this would be a piece of research. The scientist does not usually think of the writing of books or preparing of lectures as research. Writing seems to him to be a rather tiresome labour that he must do after the fun of laboratory research and discovery is over. I therefore sat down to use the time available more in hope of making a summary than a discovery. But when I began to do this I came to realize the extent to which **having to describe the results of one's thoughts to others is a part of the process of discovery itself.** We are social creatures, depending far more than we realize on communication with each other. We can understand better both the workings of the brain and the nature of scientific inquiry itself if we realize how deeply our whole life is influenced by this necessity of communication. Paying attention to this fact has made me think in a way that is new and helpful to me. (Young 1)

III. WHAT IS RIGHT WITH WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM?

Last fall (November 1986) the National Assessment of Educational Progress published The Writing Report Card--a study of 90,000 written responses by 55,000 students attending public and private schools across the nation. NAEP is a Congressionally mandated project and the only regularly conducted national survey of student achievement in reading, writing, and other academic areas. Their findings were not encouraging. They concluded that writing skills among American students are weak and demonstrate inability to think critically or communicate effectively. Most students have difficulty organizing their thoughts coherently in writing. Only 20 percent of students write at an adequate level. The report sees a link between students' writing problems and a pervasive lack of instructional emphasis on developing higher-order skills in all areas of the curriculum.

The report found that certain teaching practices made a difference in students' writing performance. Students who reported doing more planning, revising, and editing wrote better than those who did not. In addition, the study found that students who reported writing three or more essays during a six-week period performed better than students who reported doing no writing during that time.

The report states that reforms that stress writing across the curriculum and the process of writing, rather than the results, seem to hold promise. The report also concluded that teachers in all subjects should require clear and effective writing by their students.

The students' performance falls far short of the standards called for in A Nation at Risk, the dramatic 1983 report by the National Commission of Excellence in Education (Rothman 1, 15).

"Well over 60 percent of America's 110 million salaried workers generate written material on a regular basis. . . . In view of the results in the Writing Report Card one has to wonder just how 'appropriately and effectively' they all communicate" ("Students Lack . . .").

Michigan Tech's Art Young and Toby Fulwiler clearly indicate the role colleges and universities must play in correcting this problem:

> Many schools lack a comprehensive literate environment which encourages good writing and reading habits. Without such an environment, students are not compelled to take writing and reading seriously. In schools where the lessons taught in English classes are not repeated and emphasized in the student's other classes, the knowledge and skills learned in those lessons tend to atrophy. . . . Language skills deserve more conscious attention from teachers in all academic disciplines, and teachers who recognize the role played by these 'elementary' skills can help students increase their learning ability, improve their communication skills, and enhance their cognitive and emotional growth. . . . A comprehensive program must start from certain pedagogical premises: 1) that communication education (primarily writing, but including reading, speaking, and listening) is the responsibility of the entire academic community, 2) that such education must be integrated across departmental boundaries, and 3) that it must be continuous during all four years of undergraduate education. (Young ix)

Randal Freisinger says, "The most serious problem in student papers is an inability to think critically, to synthesize, to structure logically" (8). The best way to overcome this problem is through more expressive, exploratory writing.

> The goal of this method, quite compatible with Piaget's view of the learning process, is to allow students to expand their existing picture to new experiences. As they encounter new materials, they must either assimilate the materials into their image or they must accommodate them--that is, restructure their image to make it compatible with the new information. The key point is this: **These connections must be personal. They can occur meaningfully in no other way.** Expressive language, both oral and written, promotes open-ended exploration of new experiences. Product-oriented, transactional language promotes closure. Its function is to report mastered fact, not to assist learning. (Freisinger 9)
>
> The development of writing ability is the responsibility of **all teachers in all disciplines at all educational levels.** . . . If we teachers, at all levels and in all disciplines, will use language to promote learning as well as informing; if we will approach writing as a complex developmental process; and if we will encourage students to travel extensively in the universe of discourse, then we can become both enablers and ennoblers, and we can help students discover the power of language to which, naturally or not, they are heirs. (Freisinger 12)

A great deal more could be added to this section, but let me conclude with the observations of Janet Emig of Rutgers University. Her research has demonstrated that higher cognitive functions seem to develop most fully **only** with the support of verbal language. She specifically advances the notion that writing is a unique mode of learning because it involves three patterns: **enactive** (learning by doing), **iconic** (learning through images), and **symbolic** (learning through representations). Writing thus involves hand, eye, and brain (Tchudi 15).

IV. WHAT IS WRONG WITH WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

The past decade has seen the development of a number of writing-across-the-curriculum models. Each model has succeeded somewhere--at least temporarily. However, my research, my conversations with those who have run WAC programs in Michigan's community colleges, and my attendance at this year's Conference on College Composition and Communication in Atlanta have convinced me that all is not well with the WAC movement. What often begins with the enthusiasm of a "conversion experience" often ends in frustration and bitterness--towards one's colleagues (who just won't give it a genuine effort), toward administrators (who break promises and withdraw financial support), and toward students (who may be writing more but no better than before).

The sorry truth is that it is extremely difficult to build a writing program that works across the curriculum, and it is even more difficult to build one that has staying power. Many programs have succeeded only in exhausting, frustrating, discouraging, and embittering those who worked so hard to get them started. All too often the funding runs out, the faculty get tired, the students prove resistant, and the leaders simply become exhausted. What had begun in such hope as one small light shining in the darkness proves to be no eternal flame--just one more brief flicker of hope and a swift but sure return to darkness.

Some succeed in spite of the odds, but anyone about to launch a WAC program ought to know from the start that the odds are against any long-term success--and for a lot of good (or bad) reasons: faculty resistance, lack of long-range funding, too many part-time faculty, union contracts, the sheer complexity of the process, the difficulty in measuring impact or success, and the paucity and expense of good workshop leaders.

At this point I want to provide my reader with the most recent and most honest assessment of the WAC movement I have found to date. It is the paper delivered by Tori Haring-Smith of Brown University to the Conference on College Composition and Communication, 20 March 1987. Her paper is candidly titled: "What's Wrong with Writing Across the Curriculum."

Tori Haring-Smith begins by noting that the mere presence of a WAC program has been grounds for assuming that a college is on the right track with regards to writing. In fact such programs have been considered such an unquestioned good that when WAC efforts have been failures, the proponents have tended to blame the faculty involved rather than any features of the program itself.

"Now I am not about to suggest that WAC is a bad idea, but I will propose that several models of it violate basic principles of the movement."

Haring-Smith is quick to point out that she is "a strong proponent of WAC, but for that very reason I think we must examine with careful scrutiny the ways in which writing has been integrated into our curriculum."

She says the WAC movement seems to be based on two fundamental principles: First it encourages all faculty to share responsibility for improving student writing. And secondly, on a campus where WAC is working well, the faculty and students should value writing as a means of driving learning.

She adds, "These principles are sound and praiseworthy, but a careful examination of three models of WAC reveals deep-seated contradictions within these principles and within the program."

By far the most common form of WAC is what she calls the missionary approach: One or more members of an English Department will lead a crusade to get other departments to integrate writing into their courses. The faculty attend training seminars led by imported experts who convince them that

writing helps students learn. They review the various writing processes, are frequently given writing practice, and are eventually encouraged to instruct courses that are usually labeled something like "writing-intensive." This model makes explicit that faculty throughout the institution are concerned with writing. It may help unify the college community around this obvious shared responsibility. Faculty from various disciplines get together to exchange ideas about learning in general.

But programs like these often have some serious disadvantages we must acknowledge: first, like any conversion experience, being trained to teach in a WAC program will be resisted by most faculty. No matter how enthusiastic and charismatic a program director may be, most faculty will resent being asked to teach more. They are already overworked, they will say, and their curricula are already bulging. Some of these skeptics may be won over by demonstrations and discussions, but most will continue to see writing assignments as an extra burden. "If English teachers are not required to teach biology," they say, "why should biology teachers teach writing?"

Even when an especially charismatic workshop leader succeeds in converting most of the faculty, problems remain: The training workshops are necessarily superficial. They can only begin to introduce faculty to the complexities of teaching writing and using it to drive learning, and yet after attending these workshops faculty are certified in one way or another to teach writing in the content areas. But by presenting brief faculty development workshops as sufficient training for the teaching of writing, we undercut the position of professional teachers of composition.

If any faculty member can be prepared to teach writing after a two-day or even a two-month workshop, why should composition specialists spend years preparing themselves to do the same thing?

Haring-Smith goes on to say: "We should also worry, I think, about how long-lasting such training is." Colleagues, who feel confident and committed after the training sessions, will face serious problems in implementing WAC. Students will resist; assignments won't go as well as they were planned; and responding to student-writing will eventually become a grind. These teachers need ongoing support if they are to take writing seriously. We may also need to find some means of evaluating these WAC courses.

As time goes on, teachers in WAC programs may reduce the amount of writing they assign, limit the writing to essay exams, or begin to respond only to grammar and mechanics. Then a WAC program begins to undermine the notion that good writing involves revision and practice.

Training workshops may provide only a temporary change in attitudes, and as a serious dieter knows, when a temporary change in attitude wears off, the original attitude may only be strengthened. Even if faculty training is successful and long-lasting, WAC may do little to change student attitudes toward writing.

When we designate any course as writing-intensive, this indicates to students that other courses are not and should not be writing intensive (WI).

In some schools students are required to take a certain number of WI courses. This leads some students to say, "I don't want to take that WI course. I've already had my two."

Some writing-intensive courses have inherited the problems of freshman composition and intensified them. They seem to isolate writing, and student attitudes toward writing remain unchanged.

Haring-Smith states very strongly that if a WAC program "is to have any real effect on student writing, and not exhaust the faculty who meet this wall of student resistance, it must change students' attitudes first."

There are two other popular models of WAC: In one model, English teachers become Jacks and Jills of all trades. They teach courses entitled writing-history, writing-biology. But each course is grounded within the English department. Such programs recognize that writing is best taught by writing professionals. But like other WAC programs that devalue writing, this model devalues the subject matter. Teachers who are trained in literature are simply not qualified to judge the special logic and rhetoric of other disciplines, much less their content.

Some English departments address this problem by hiring people from other departments to teach these courses, but these instructors are not especially qualified to teach writing. Furthermore this still faces one major objection: It isolates the subject of writing within the English department. This model perpetuates the idea that only English faculty care about and are responsible for improving students' writing.

A third model is designed to recognize the special expertise of the writing instructor and the subject-area teacher. This model uses team-taught courses. Composition teachers pair up with content-area teachers to offer courses for majors in each discipline. Or they ask students to sign up for a paired set of courses: one a content-area course, another a composition course. All students in a particular writing course are also enrolled simultaneously in another particular course. The same papers are submitted for both courses and are evaluated by both teachers. These programs recognize the need for expertise in both writing and the content area. But they continue to reinforce the misconception that only the English department cares about student writing. Plus they imply that writing and learning are not integrated but separable skills. In doing so they often equate writing with editing, not learning.

From all of this, Tori Haring-Smith concludes: "These three models all put the burden for integrating writing on faculty. Faculty members are asked to change their attitudes and practices to address the overwhelming problem of student writing. But, getting students to write more will not ensure that they will write differently. Furthermore, like so many educational reforms, WAC asks faculty to become more active but allows students to remain in a relatively passive role."

Haring-Smith then goes on to describe a fourth model that uses peer tutors in a WAC effort. This, she feels, combats the problem of student attitudes while shaping faculty attitudes as well. But this model is less well known.

Rather than asking more of already overworked colleagues, WAC programs based on peer tutoring provide additional assistance for those faculty who include significant amounts of writing in their courses. You can see immediately that it shifts the role. Rather than the English department saying to their colleagues, "You must do more," here the English department is going out and saying, "I will offer you assistance as you help me in the effort to improve student writing."

Peer-tutoring uses undergraduates and faculty from all areas of the university. The students are usually nominated by faculty in all disciplines, and those faculty thereby become involved in WAC.

Haring-Smith notes: "These tutors may be assigned to courses in a variety of disciplines. They become first-readers for student papers. At Brown University we assign one tutor for every 15-20 students in a class involved in the WAC program."

Papers are first submitted to the tutors who comment on them as peer readers. Peer tutors are trained to respond helpfully. They are less judgmental. They tell the writer if parts are unclear or poorly organized.

Writer and tutor have individual conferences before the paper is resubmitted to the faculty for approval. Students submit both versions of the paper, the original with the peer comments and the final draft, to the faculty member. Faculty evaluate only the final draft, but the first draft is there to give them a history of the paper, allaying their fears that the peer tutor may be misleading the student or acting as a ghost writer.

Seeing peer comments in lay language offers teachers a model for commenting on student prose. It demonstrates to faculty that students can comment intelligently on each other's prose. It builds faculty respect for student tutors.

Haring-Smith feels that the program dramatically changes student attitudes toward writing. "Students are, probably for the first time, brought together to talk about writing outside of class. The results on all campuses where such programs exist is a heightened sensitivity to the importance of writing and a growing interest among students in improving it."

She also feels that the comments made by peer tutors may be more meaningful for students. Students can dismiss the faculty member's comments as the product of excessively high standards, but a peer tutor is a member of the same generation.

Some may criticize this program for allowing faculty to remain too passive. But in fact such programs immerse faculty in student writing for a much longer time than any retreat could. Precisely because such programs do not require major curricular overhaul and major faculty retooling, they are more likely to be accepted by institutions.

Some fear that students cannot be adequately trained to teach writing as peer tutors. But there is a difference in the level of certification. The tutor's tasks are limited and specific. Tutors are expected to respond only as lay-readers, not as writing teachers.

Tori Haring-Smith concludes by saying: "I feel the main reasons for poor student writing these days are two: their poor training in revision, and their generally passive attitude toward education. When students lean back, put their feet on the desk and say, 'Teach me if you dare,' they will not learn how to write."

If a WAC program is to work, it must address these issues of student attitudes. Peer tutoring is one of the most effective ways of asking students to take a more active role in their own education. "Simply adding more writing to college courses, without altering the way in which students think about and practice writing, only invites them to reinforce bad habits. When students are required to write more slowly and revise more carefully, they learn quickly."

"We must carefully evaluate what WAC programs are really accomplishing. In many cases it reveals a veneer of writing spread thinly throughout a faculty. I prefer the term writing-throughout-the-community because, for me, it stresses the new attitudes and practices that should accompany any effort to improve student prose" (Haring-Smith).

V. WHICH MODEL, IF ANY, IS RIGHT FOR MONROE COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE?

Each of the four models discussed by Tori Haring-Smith in the preceding section has been successful somewhere. However, if we accept her analysis of these models, clearly, the first three have some serious drawbacks when we try to project how successful they might be at Monroe County Community College.

The biggest problem with models 1-3 is that all three put too much of the burden on the faculty. Any way you look at it, each of these models asks the faculty to increase their work load. Even though effective learning is our most important consideration, and even though there are strong arguments supporting the effectiveness of writing-to-learn in a wide variety of classes, there are some good reasons why models 1-3 show little promise of surviving over the long haul.

Some of those reasons are as follow:

1) Most of the early WAC projects received substantial funding from outside sources--government grants from such sources as the National Endowment for the Humanities or private foundations such as General Motors and the Bush Foundation. However, these grants were intended as "seed" money, and these organizations are no longer funding similar projects. They expect current programs and future programs to be funded from within the institutions.

Most of the existing programs are finding it difficult to continue the same level of programming without the outside funds. (My telephone conversations with some of the best-known consultants in our area reveal that these programs can be costly. Those who have been doing this the longest time and are in greatest demand to run the workshops are now receiving one thousand dollars a day plus expenses: e.g., Art Young, Michigan Tech:; Barbara Morris, The University of Michigan; Toby Fulwiler, University of Vermont.)

Without adequate funding to continue holding workshops, to provide released time for program administrators, and to train newly-hired faculty or newly-interested faculty, the faculty become frustrated, the program becomes divisive, and it quickly dies.

2) There is definitely a "burn out" factor to consider. My conversations with faculty from community colleges in Michigan that have had WAC programs reveal that most have been discouraged by the long-term results. Let me give some examples: Between 1981-83 Alpena Community College, Jackson Community College, and St. Clair County Community College made rather vigorous attempts to establish an emphasis on writing across the curriculum at their schools. They brought in the best consultants from U of M and Michigan Tech to lead several workshops. Alpena sent at least one member of its faculty to a special two-week summer workshop on WAC. He then came back and conducted a number of workshops for faculty on his campus. Initially, the effort was received enthusiastically. Now, all three campuses have little or no activity related to writing in content areas. Most of the early leaders are "burned out"--discouraged by the lack of continued support from faculty and administration.

Only one community college in the state has a vigorous WAC program at this time: Delta College.

The Delta College program, which was approved by the faculty senate in February of 1987 and by the board of trustees in March of 1987, will work this way. All degree-seeking students at Delta must complete six hours of work in content-area writing courses--this is in addition to their existing composition class requirements. These sections will be specifically designated in the schedule of courses each semester. Any faculty member may volunteer to teach one or all of his or her courses as content-area writing courses. Courses which use writing not only as a means of testing but also as

a mode of learning may qualify as a content-area writing course. Teachers wishing to offer such courses will draft outlines describing course objectives and writing strategies used to achieve these objectives. Proposals for these courses will be evaluated and approved by an elected Writing Advisory Board. The Writing Advisory Board will sponsor workshops and graduate courses in writing across the curriculum for interested faculty. The Writing Advisory Board will be an elected body with one representative coming from each division.

However, Delta has circumstances which make it quite different from Monroe and most of the other community colleges in our state. One major reason for Delta College's present program has been Stephen Tchudi, English professor at Michigan State University. Professor Tchudi has taught three semester-long seminars on WAC for the combined faculties of Delta and Saginaw Valley College. He is the author of several books and numerous articles in the field, and as such he has used his experience with the faculty at Delta to guide their program and to further his own research.

The workshops at Delta have been offered for credit. So the faculty at Delta had several incentives to become involved: they could get graduate credit for doing so, and, since they have no teachers' union at Delta, they could use the experience to show professional growth and to gain status within their division. Indeed, this may be a more significant factor than one would like to assume: it may also act as an incentive for those who volunteer to teach the writing-intensive courses that are being included in the new class schedules.

Some of the other problems encountered by WAC programs cannot be ignored. Although an effective consultant can demonstrate ways to avoid some of the added workload that faculty fear must inevitably be connected with an increased emphasis on writing, and even if more meaningful learning does take

place in the writing-to-learn classroom, most faculty will resist. "We learned right away that writing workshops cannot inspire or transform unmotivated, inflexible, or highly-suspicious faculty members. . . . Some people seem to be constitutionally uncomfortable with workshop-style activities" (Fulwiler, "How Well Does Writing Across the Curriculum Work?" 116).

Many faculty are certain they have too much content to cover and too little time in which to do the job. They feel there is no time to add more time-consuming writing assignments. Some of these fears are unfounded--but not entirely. Almost any change takes more work to implement, and since writing is a very complex intellectual process and no quick fix will solve everybody's writing problem, it is easy to see why even the most enthusiastic faculty become discouraged by the slow progress. Even if the faculty begin the program with great enthusiasm, students often resist, assignments fail, the work load becomes a grind, and before long the faculty stop trying.

Another problem is that the training workshops are often superficial--too brief to do much long-term good. Two hours, two days, or two months will not be enough to provide a thorough understanding of an extremely complex issue.

But, as I have already pointed out, the biggest problem with these first three models is that they all put the burden almost exclusively on the faculty. Each of these **teacher-centered** models depends on teacher energy to work and to keep working. It is wrong to "blame" faculty who drop out or fail to become involved with this informed pedagogy. Colleges are busy places with lots going on, pulling us all with legitimate demands in many different directions. Faculty are encouraged to spend more time assigning and evaluating student writing, to be more creative, more active, and in all likelihood, to care more than the students. But at the same time, faculty members are encouraged to become involved in professional organizations, to

keep current with the latest developments in their disciplines, to contribute to campus and community activities, to speak in professional and public forums, and in their spare time to occasionally produce writing and research of their own. It is not easy to keep these many roles in a productive balance.

However, if there is a model which appears to avoid most of the potential problems of the teacher-centered models, it is Model #4--The Writing Center. A writing-across-the-curriculum program that is carefully tied in with a well-designed, well-staffed writing center can provide the long-term support needed for success.

Some of the reasons for this I have already provided, but the biggest difference between this and the other approaches--and the biggest reason for its potential success--is the shared responsibility between students and faculty. A successful writing center that is fully utilized by faculty in all areas can create an atmosphere of lively discussion and a heightened sensitivity among students about writing and critical thinking--and how these advanced cognitive skills really work.

Only when students become accustomed to using writing in all subject areas will they begin to see how writing promotes thought. One cannot be passive and at the same time generate words, sentences, and paragraphs--thoughts. The process of discovery, of using language to find out what you are going to say, is a key part of the learning process. Yet, "The emphasis on writing as a tool for inquiry, a stage in the articulation of knowledge, seems so rare in American schools that it plays a negligible role in the education system. . . . Instead of using writing to **test** other subjects, we can elevate it to where it will **teach** other subjects, for in making sense the writer is making knowledge" (Fulwiler, Teaching with Writing 7, 11).

(Indeed, this is a very important issue in the philosophy of teaching writing--or anything else. Instructors must clearly differentiate between the time when they are serving in the role as helper, guide, or coach and the moment when they must step out of that role and act as evaluator and judge. They must make it absolutely clear when they are guiding the process--at which time students are encouraged to experiment and make substantive changes--and when they are judging the product. Too often we only make the assignment and judge the product. This need for attention to the process can be likened to the need for rehearsals for a play or practice for a sports team. No director passes out the script and says, "I'll see you the night of the performance in a month." No coach gets the team together, assigns positions, and says, "I'll see you when we have our first game next month." There must be practices and rehearsals with writing-to-learn too.)

When peer tutors serve as first-readers of all major writing assignments, the feedback comes at the right time in the learning process--and with no added editing load being piled on the already overworked faculty.

The faculty are not as likely to burn out on this approach as they are with any of the other approaches. This will **keep** the faculty involved over longer periods. Those who are most keenly interested can become involved in the day-to-day activities of the center--observing, guiding, training, serving as model readers for the student readers. It would probably be wise to recruit two or three faculty members from different departments each semester. In return for one released class, they would spend seven hours a week in the writing center. They would tutor students, but more importantly, they would become thoroughly acquainted with the activities of the writing center and would be more likely to use it themselves in the semesters that follow.

VI. SURVEY OF FACULTY VIEWS OF STUDENT WRITING AT MONROE COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

ADMINISTRATION OF THE SURVEY:

The survey was given to all forty-nine full-time teaching faculty at Monroe County Community College--excluding librarians and counselors. The response: after only a little begging on my part, a remarkable thing happened--100% of the faculty completed all or part of the survey.

FINDINGS:

The faculty of Monroe County Community College have found that a significant percentage of their students have serious and persistent problems with written communication. Monroe County Community College is not unusual in this respect. These findings are consistent with the findings of The Writing Report Card published in the fall of 1986 by the National Assessment of Educational Progress. However, the fact that the problem is a common one does not make it any less disturbing.

Even a casual reading of the survey results indicates that an overwhelming majority of our students, when asked to write, have problems with both large-scale and small-scale matters. Problems with such issues as organization, supporting an idea, coherence, grammar, punctuation, spelling, vocabulary, and proofreading are persistent problems across the disciplines.

When asked if they feel that a significant number of their students are seriously handicapped by deficient writing skills, 80% of the faculty replied that they feel this is true.

When asked about possible solutions to this dilemma, the faculty thought we should try a number of approaches. Most faculty (63%) felt we should require two semesters of composition--which at one time had been a requirement for most programs at Monroe County Community College.

The majority of our faculty also said the following: 1) There should be a greater emphasis on writing competency in all areas of the curriculum. 2) The college should require remedial writing courses for all students who demonstrate serious writing deficiencies on the ASSET tests.

On the other hand, most of our faculty do not feel that it would be wise to make a writing-proficiency exam a graduation requirement.

A significant number (21) of the faculty expressed a willingness to take part in faculty dialogues across the curriculum in an effort to explore better ways to reinforce writing skills. And an even larger number (27) said that they would support attempts to foster a campus-wide emphasis on improving writing skills across the curriculum--though several made it clear that their support will be contingent on the type of program that is developed.

TENTATIVE CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS:

1) **Faculty support the freshman composition requirement and would like to see the second semester requirement reinstated**--at least for those seeking degrees from Monroe County Community College.

2) **Faculty support the idea of placing a greater emphasis upon writing in general education courses across the curriculum.**

The anecdotal responses indicate that faculty perceive writing as an important skill for students in dealing with most kinds of academic work. However, some indicated that a greater dialogue should take place between the English department and other departments so that reinforcement of writing skills can be consistent and useful.

3) **Most faculty endorse the idea that writing can be an important part of learning. Furthermore, many appear willing to explore new ways to use writing more effectively in their courses.**

The fact that well over 50% will support attempts to foster a campus-wide emphasis on improving writing skills across the curriculum suggests that a dialogue can begin on the MCCC campus that could lead to a greater emphasis on good writing.

My research indicates that this dialogue might include discussions of such issues as these:

1) analyzing the particular problems unique to writing in a specific discipline and how those problems might be overcome,

2) designing more effective assignments,

3) incorporating brief, ungraded, expressive writing assignments that foster critical thinking,

4) emphasizing the importance of skills in revision and proofreading,

5) emphasizing the importance of writing without creating an unmanageable paper load for the instructor,

6) helping students during the writing process,

7) considering various options when evaluating student writing.

VII. THE SURVEY: FACULTY VIEWS OF STUDENT WRITING AT MONROE COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE (DETAILS OF THE SURVEY)

I. Do your students have **consistent, serious** writing problems in the following areas? (Most did not respond in every category--indicating that some categories do not apply to the types of writing done by their students.)

CATEGORY	YES	SOMETIMES	NO
Organization	30	13	1
Narrowing a Topic	23	14	3
Supporting an Idea	28	13	2
Sense of Purpose	22	15	4
Awareness of Audience	16	11	8
Tone	11	13	7
Originality	16	15	6
Coherence	23	15	3
Diction	15	12	5
Paragraph Structure	25	12	4
Sentence Construction	25	14	2
Grammar	31	12	1
Usage	19	18	2
Transitions	20	10	5
Revising	14	15	8
Research Skills	22	14	4
Punctuation	25	13	1
Spelling	31	12	1
Proofreading	26	12	1
Vocabulary	25	15	2

II. Indicate the type of writing assignments your students are required to complete.

WRITING ASSIGNMENT	REGULARLY	SOMETIMES	NEVER
Essay Exams	8	20	21
Article Reviews	5	20	24
Expository Essays	7	4	38
Lab Reports	15	7	27
Research Papers	12	16	21
Business Reports	2	13	34
Letters	3	14	32
Critical/Analytical Essays	5	10	34
Outlines	16	22	11
Study Questions	10	20	19
Observation Logs	6	11	32
Journals	4	9	36
Creative Writing--Poems, Short Stories, etc.	2	6	41
Argumentative Essays	5	4	40

(A few faculty listed other categories more specifically related to their disciplines: lab notebooks, position papers, case studies, patient care studies and plans, lesson plans, tech. documentation, and micro-themes.)

III. Faculty were asked to write brief answers to the following questions. (Not all respondents replied to every question.)

Do you feel that a significant number of your students are seriously handicapped by deficient writing skills?

40 Replied Yes
3 Replied No
6 Made No Comment

Other comments included the following:

"About 25% do."

"They are handicapped, but not seriously."

"In my experience the deficiencies are infrequent and not serious (among nursing students)."

"Yes and No--a lack of ability to communicate ideas coherently is a serious handicap for a significant number. On the other hand many have problems with grammar, structure, etc. but are able to get a point acorss--this is not as big a problem, in my view."

"They are deficient until they are forced to write appropriately."

"Yes, but they do little writing in the typical welding class."

"Not a significant number, but many do have minor difficulties."

"Yes, writing skills are as important to technology students as they are to other students."

"I would say that only about 20% can communicate effectively and accurately through writing."

"My guess is that at least one-third are handicapped by deficient writing skills."

"Yes--the students tend to write as they speak, and I find their speech leaves much to be desired."

"Yes! The composition of a routine letter of application is a monumental task for most students."

If your students' writing is deficient, what do you feel our community college should do to help improve writing?

Require two semesters of English Composition:

31 Replied Yes
5 Replied No
13 Made No Comment

Other comments included:

"One semester should be enough--maybe it should be made more effective."

"The student should have to pass the course, not just take it."

"Absolutely, although this is not the sole solution."

"Probably the best solution is to have all classes require more writing assignments."

"It would be a step in the right direction. Two years is probably not enough time, but it is a start."

"I think we are too stuck on 'term' papers of great length and the use of the style manual. We should demand that a student should be able to write many (12) short papers (1-2 pages) on textbook material or some topic. Quality not quantity."

"Not enough room in the schedule."

"Yes, but focus is important."

"Yes, as a minimum."

"To be sure. Yes, and stress basic grammar."

"Yes, with pre-tests and post-tests."

"No. The relevance of this to certain programs is questionable."

"No. I'm afraid that most tech students do not react favorably to the requirement of one semester. Our efforts are better spent in winning their respect and support for one semester."

"Yes. No question, it is needed."

"Screen out the deficient through testing and cut down class size to better individualize instruction."

Have faculty place more emphasis on writing competency in all areas of the curriculum:

27 Replied Yes
9 Replied No
13 Made No Comment

Other comments included:

"I have many projects to grade and read--I would not see this as my major objective."

"Yes, if writing competency is defined as ability to communicate in writing versus grammar, etc."

"This should be done as much as is appropriate to the course."

"Yes! This would help a great deal."

"When practical, yes. However, areas like math and physics do not necessarily lend themselves to this approach."

"I can't get them to read before lecture time."

"There isn't time to devote to this."

"Who will be responsible for this emphasis?"

"In many technical classes there is not time to worry about writing deficiencies."

"Considering the time demands that writing activities make on both students and faculty, this may be difficult to achieve in many of the curricula: in terms of time demands made on students, the Respiratory Therapy program is already as full as an egg."

"We should have more required courses that require writing."

"In order for students to sense the necessity for writing competency, each teacher could create written assignments. However, some of us may not be as competent in judging good writing skills."

"In some areas it is not important. When grammar is emphasized at the expense of creative ideas, I feel we do a disservice to our students."

"Yes, but how to best do it in each of our respective areas? There's the question."

"May help emphasize the universal importance of written communication. May help dispel the student notion, 'I don't need to worry about grammar, spelling, etc. This isn't an English class.'"

Have the college require remedial writing courses for all students who demonstrate serious writing deficiencies on the ASSET tests:

32 Replied Yes
11 Replied No
6 Made No Reply

Other comments included:

"This seems the best option. Students can be identified early and corrective measures taken."

"We should provide such courses and **very strongly suggest** enrollment."

"Not likely . . . part-time, certificate, etc. . . . wouldn't go for this."

"Not required, but to have it available would be useful."

"Yes. Better yet remedial-reading courses."

"Yes, if the test is accurate."

"Oh! What a fine can of worms that would be."

"Uncertain . . . My experience indicates that many students are too 'sloppy' minded to follow directions."

"No. Students are already scared witless of English. Threatening them with remedial courses will drive them away in herds."

"I'm not sure remedial courses work. The data does not indicate they work."

"This would be a good place to start. Such action would demonstrate institutional recognition of the importance of written communication in all disciplines."

"Yes. There is a basic level that a college student should attain to be functional and representative of one's education."

Create opportunities for faculty dialogue across the curriculum so that we may explore better ways of reinforcing writing skills in all disciplines.

21 Replied Yes
4 Replied No
24 Made No Reply

Other comments included:

"Certainly. Remember many faculty may feel threatened by this notion--we may expose our own weaknesses."

"Sounds good, but I have no particular suggestions."

"Only for those who request these 'opportunities.'"

"I don't think writing skills can be reinforced in all disciplines and still allow achievement in other areas to be measured accurately."

"It seems reasonable that the faculty could pool our ideas and reinforce writing skills."

"Rather as a recommendation--a help for those who want it, so they can see how they are doing."

"Not necessary."

"Absolutely."

"Only good if we agree on some grading values."

Have the college require a writing-proficiency exam as a graduation requirement:

10 Replied Yes
17 Replied No
22 Made No Reply

Other comments included:

"No. Improved writing skills are desirable but not absolutely necessary."

"This is an important skill that every college graduate should be able to demonstrate."

"This could prove embarrassing."

"A reading proficiency exam."

"Would this be necessary if the above changes are made?"

"Many graduates couldn't pass my daughter's 4th grade class."

"Not a bad idea, but what precedent is there for this particular approach?"

"I would not want to see us go out of business."

"I don't feel this is necessary if the student has passed his classes."

"No. This just begs the question, I think. The college courses must be set up so that if a student cannot write competently, then he or she cannot graduate because of bad grades."

"No. As a threat with negative results. However, a line on the transcript certifying that the graduate has passed a voluntary writing-proficiency exam would put it in a positive light."

"No. This belongs within the coursework and at the admittance stage."

Other things I think we could do to improve our students' writing:

"Could we co-ordinate assignments within the divisions. For example, if an instructor gives essay exams, should we teach a block on how to write an essay answer? If an instructor assigns a book review, should we develop that as a writing block?"

"Every faculty member must take an interest in student writing skills."

"Hire another full-time writing instructor."

"Attempt to convince students in all MCCC classes that writing skills will be crucial to success in the working world."

"Attempt to include writing assignments which offer direct application to the working world."

"The content of English 101 and 102 (including current tests, assignment sheets, texts, outlines, etc.) should be reviewed periodically by members of Tech and Business Divisions."

"This is a serious problem. All faculty members need to grade all papers with a critical eye to writing skills."

"We need to show them how vital the skills are in the real world of the job market, as well as to show them, even more importantly, that competence in language is necessary for human growth and prosperity in the broadest senses."

"First improve faculty and administrators' skills."

"Start a Writing Center and make it available to all students in all courses."

"Help students learn how to study first, then work on writing skills."

"Perhaps editors and helpers in the LAL."

"Establish a standardized system of essay exam evaluation. Promote use of LAL word processing facilities. Investigate the practicality of implementing additional computer aids such as spell checking, grammar evaluating, and on-line thesaurus/dictionary programs."

"I would favor more emphasis on writing skills through additional English composition classes, remedial courses and writing proficiency requirements for graduation. I do not think a student should be further penalized for writing deficiencies in classes such as math and computer programming."

"All students must take class notes and outline text material. They also must read the text. Students must think, reason, speak, write, read, etc. If they are unable to do any of these tasks, they are unable to learn. All of these areas are interrelated. No one is the key. Taking an objective test requires the above skills and many of my students are unable to do that."

"The learning assistance lab is the best approach that is currently available."

"Require improved penmanship."

"Do we employ remedial reading/writing specialists on campus?"

"Require a technical writing course in the technology division."

"One caution I would raise is that we be careful not to operate on the basis of human perfectability. Some people will never be able to write well--no matter what we do or how hard they try."

"Individual counseling of students to make them aware of their problems and corrective actions suggested to them have been productive."

"Require more formal writing in all areas of instruction. Faculty might need staff development in this area. I can write well and can recognize when a student does not. However, I do not have the skills to help them with their problem."

"Have college representative discuss issues with elementary and secondary schools' administrators and teachers."

Would you support attempts to foster a campus-wide emphasis on improving writing skills across the curriculum?

27 Replied Yes
3 Replied No
19 Made No Reply

Other comments included:

"It depends on how it would be implemented."

"I am deeply cynical about its coming to anything. If students do not enter the college with a strong sense of the vital importance of effective writing and speaking, I doubt that many of them will look upon writing as more than a temporary nuisance imposed by a gang of old curmudgeon professors in order to cut into students' 'fun time.'"

"I personally do not emphasize grammar, only ideas. So if this meant harsh policing with an emphasis on grammar, I would say no. If it meant encouraging students to take writing seriously, I would say yes."

"Yes. I would be willing to learn to be a better writer myself in addition to helping the students."

"Writing skills need to be included in the grading process for all courses--not just in composition courses."

"Not a campus-wide effort. But an effort coordinated by the English Department and perhaps involving a few other departments."

"Depends . . . I would have to know what 'support' means."

"I would enjoy a campus-wide effort in other areas of literacy: statistics, computers."

"I would not fight against one, but I will not require papers."

"Communication skills are essential in all fields."

VIII. SELECTED WRITING-ACROSS-THE-CURRICULUM PROGRAMS IN THE STATE OF MICHIGAN

The University of Michigan:

The creation of an English Composition Board (ECB) by a vote of the College of Literature, Science, and Arts to assume responsibility for the teaching of writing within the college was the initial thrust of the program at the U of M. The ECB then undertook the development of the following seven-part program:

1) **Assessment**--The ECB assesses the writing of every student entering the college for the first time: guided by the results of that assessment, the ECB places each student at an appropriate level of writing instruction.

2) **Tutorial**--The ECB teaches the special tutorial courses required of those students placed at the lowest level by their performance in the writing assessment. The ECB also determines the length of time that such students must remain in tutorial courses.

3) **Introductory Composition**--The ECB places students into Introductory Composition, assists the English Department in defining the nature of the course as well as improving its quality, and assumes responsibility for relating introductory composition to the college program.

4) **Writing Workshop**--The ECB staffs and operates a Writing Workshop open to every undergraduate in the college on a self- or faculty-referral basis. Workshop attendance may also be required of students whose performance on the writing assessment in ECB tutorials indicates a need for such support. Students are considered to be entitled to the support of experienced teachers of composition at any stage of their own work to compose a piece of writing for any course.

5) Upperlevel Writing--The ECB advises and helps each collegiate department and program create a course designed to fulfill the Upperlevel Writing portion of the requirement.

6) Research--The ECB is responsible for reporting to the faculty at suitable intervals upon the quality of the program.

7) Outreach--In the process of considering and affirming the new writing requirement, faculty asked the ECB to attempt to improve writing instruction in Michigan high schools and community colleges (Roberts 7-8).

Michigan Technological University:

In 1977 Art Young, Chairman of the English Department, and Toby Fulwiler, Director of the Freshman Writing Program, began to develop a program to promote more writing in all disciplines. They began by offering two-day workshops for colleagues in history, business, and engineering. Later, with a grant from General Motors, they expanded these workshops to four days and offered stipends to attending teachers. The workshop program proved successful, and Michigan Tech is now recognized as a national leader in the WAC movement.

From the first the workshop discussions refused to focus on skills alone--the subject most faculty thought they had come to master. "The workshops explored the relationship between writing and thinking, learning, knowing, and caring, the whole business of education. In other words, the workshops reintroduced many to the very reasons we had become teachers in the first place" (Fulwiler, Teaching with Writing Introduction).

Western Michigan University:

English 105 at Western Michigan University has several options, one of which is the course "Writing and Science," which is intended to help students become better communicators as they enter college. Students in this course are exposed to a large amount of linguistics and various kinds of writing other than the scientific, such as biography and speculative prose. Through the duration of the term, students are constantly made aware of how writing can be useful for a scientist (Roberts 6).

Delta College:

Delta has a new policy which encourages faculty members across all disciplines to incorporate writing into their teaching. In March of 1987 the Delta College Board of Trustees approved the policy which calls for writing across the curriculum. Delta is the first of Michigan's 29 community colleges to implement such a policy.

The policy states that all degree-seeking students at Delta must complete six hours of work in classes which have writing incorporated in the curriculum. These must be courses not already designated as writing classes. Faculty members will submit course proposals outlining how they intend to incorporate writing in their teaching. A Writing Advisory Board will review the proposals. Once a proposal has been approved by the advisory board, that class will be denoted with a symbol in the class schedule (Johnson).

Madonna College (Livonia, Michigan):

Between 1981 and 1983 the Humanities Division sponsored a series of short writing workshops to focus faculty attention on the need for developed skills in written discourse. At one of these meetings Dr. Barbara Morris of the University of Michigan English Composition Board addressed the faculty on the

topic "Model Programs for Writing Across the Institution." In 1983 Madonna College received an $89,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to develop a Writing Program. This program was to provide opportunities for faculty members to learn and to implement effective writing strategies appropriate for a variety of disciplines.

The program included several things: 1) a team approach representing faculty from various disciplines; 2) a learning/research period with assistance from consultants who were associated with successful, on-going college-level writing projects; 3) a pragmatic approach requiring faculty to revise course syllabi to incorporate meaningful student writing projects; 4) a consistent "process" approach to writing in all disciplines; 5) a "practice what you preach" philosophy requiring the faculty team to participate in the writing cycle.

During the first year of the endowment, twelve core faculty from a variety of disciplines were given one released class to participate in workshops and to develop new course outlines. By the end of the first year of the program over forty course syllabi were modified to include more intensive writing components. In the second year of the program the twelve core faculty offered a series of three workshops for the faculty at large. Part-time and full-time faculty were encouraged to attend.

Now that the grant period is over, workshops are being continued under the faculty Professional Development program.

According to the college's academic dean, the program "has made a significant impact on the caliber of writing, thinking, analyzing, and synthesizing at Madonna College" (Kujawa 17).

Central Michigan University:

In 1985 the CMU Academic Senate passed "A Proposal to Improve Student Writing at Central Michigan University." Before the proposal, students were required to take only one English course. The new proposal requires each student to take at least two English courses, and it requires a significant amount of writing in most general education classes (about 30 semester hours of coursework in humanities, natural sciences, social sciences, and area studies).

The CMU writing program has three parts:

1) Each student must satisfy the basic composition requirement during his or her freshmen year--with a C or better.

2) Students must complete a course in advanced composition by earning a grade of C or better in English 201A (humanities focus), 201B (natural science focus), 201C (social science focus), 201D (departmental focus--other departments have the option of implementing their own advanced composition classes as long as they are judged to be at the same level as English 201).

3) Most of the general education classes must require a significant and meaningful writing requirement. Courses may be exempted from the writing requirement if they are shown to require equivalent amounts of computation or public speaking (Silverthorn 7).

IX. A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SOME TYPICAL WRITING-ACROSS-THE-CURRICULUM PROGRAMS ACROSS THE COUNTRY

The following examples provide a small but representative sample of the wide variety of WAC programs that have been developed in the past ten years.

Beaver College (Philadelphia):

In 1975 Beaver College began discussions about writing across the disciplines. First on its own, then with the help of a generous grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities in 1977, Beaver College made it possible for the entire faculty to participate in workshops and seminars conducted by scholars prominent in rhetoric and composition.

One of the first in the nation to stress WAC, this is a cross-disciplinary program which enlists the support of English faculty members: requesting other department colleagues to submit freshmen writing samples, encouraging other faculty members to look closely at the processes involved in the teaching of writing, and introducing various writing tasks throughout all departments. In addition, the English department provides models of effective techniques for the composition program (Roberts 3).

Barbara Nodine conducted two studies to document changes that occurred as a result of faculty involvement in workshops devoted to WAC. She surveyed faculty and students in 1977 and in 1981. Faculty reported being more aware of the need to reinforce the importance of writing in each discipline, and they saw the need to present writing assignments in such a way that students would understand and be alert for audience and purpose. Faculty also agreed that greater consideration should be given to students' writing processes rather than to conventional rules, and they agreed that the responsibility for teaching writing did not rest only with the English Department. By 1981 faculty showed a new focus on instruction in writing and on giving students the opportunity to write more than one draft. There was also a greater

attention to diversity in the type and length of writing assignments. Nodine concluded that professors in every discipline should teach students to write (Nodine 16).

Kapiolani Community College, Honolulu, Hawaii:

On a survey conducted in 1980 many faculty indicated that academic success in their courses was dependent to some degree on writing effectiveness. Many also felt their students did not write well. Good writing was selected as an area of emphasis at the college--one that would nurture student learning. The first workshop was held in the spring of 1981. The three-day workshop provided an opportunity for all faculty to become informed about recent theory and practice in writing instruction. The workshop considered various strategies for instructor comments on student papers, and faculty discussed each other's writing assignments. The participants examined sample student papers. "Out of it all came a sense of commitment and a renewed realization of the importance of writing to our instruction as well as practical suggestions about how to incorporate writing into our classes" (Fearrian 2).

Following the 1981 workshop, members of the Humanities Department joined with those of the other three departments in Liberal Arts in forming a Writing-Across-the-Curriculum Committee. The coordinator of the committee is furnished with released time or overload pay to work on the project. The committee functions as a forum for the exchange of information and organizes WAC workshops and seminars.

The administration has from the first provided the resources and support to encourage the committee's efforts.

Writing Labs have been created for both campuses, staffed with student paraprofessionals and faculty supervision. Most of the faculty are convinced that a writing center is necessary to free faculty from being copy editors and to keep the emphasis where it belongs--on writing as learning. "As we have launched into more extensive writing activities in our classes, these Writing Labs have furnished invaluable assistance to our students. A course in student tutorials has been designed to provide student tutors for the Writing Labs and for other courses. . . . The College catalog reflects our emphasis on writing in general curricular statements" (Fearrian 3).

Both full-time and part-time faculty were included and were treated equally. "We have taken this project into account in our hiring process, requiring commitment to a writing emphasis . . . for positions for which we are hiring at the College" (Fearrian 3).

The WAC committee is now preparing a Writing-Across-the-Curriculum Source-Book which will include exemplary assignments that fully illustrate the principles upon which the project is based.

Lorain County Community College, Ohio

Lorain has used the faculty workshop approach. In 1981 the commitment of the administration to writing and to students with writing problems was very small. Instead, the main emphasis was on developing skills for employment. Writing was not widely encouraged in classes and was not required on entrance and exit exams. The faculty expressed great resistance to writing requirements in their courses: they believed that they did not know how to teach writing, that it was the responsibility of the English Department, and that the grading would be too time-consuming in any case.

In 1981 the WAC Committee decided that their first step was to raise faculty consciousness. They held an afternoon workshop for faculty in all disciplines. About twenty administrators and faculty attended. The key points stressed by the team leading the workshop were these: 1) writing in each discipline is a social behavior of that discipline, 2) writing skills diminish when not supported, 3) writing is not just a means to test students but to help them learn, 4) classroom writing need not be the standard report and research assignments.

Since 1981 the WAC team has served as a consulting service. One member has taken a sabbatical leave to study models for WAC programs and visit schools with such programs.

In 1985 a series of workshops was designed. The first was on a Saturday morning in February. It was attended by 25 faculty members from eight of the nine divisions of the college. All voluntarily atended a breakfast/luncheon. This workshop stressed two premises: WAC is a national movement and writing is a tool for learning. Two consultants from Oberlin College led the workshop.

In October of 1985 a second workshop was led by the same consultants from Oberlin. It was a three-hour afternoon workshop. The emphasis was on strategies for teaching writing: how to respond, how to use writing as a learning tool, how to encourage drafting and peer evaluation. Lorain County Community College is now trying to add writing-intensive courses to the graduation requirements--a proposal similar to that of Michigan's Delta College ("Writing Across the Curriculum: Issues and Models").

Boston University:

A cooperative approach to composition instruction was developed at Boston University's College of Basic Studies. This approach emphasized the following components: joint planning by rhetoric and content instructors; devotion of class time by both instructors to identification of teacher and student expectations in such areas as social science, natural science, the humanities, and psychology; devotion of time in the rhetoric classes to developing writing skills for content assignments; and preparation of rough drafts for the rhetoric instructor and revised papers for the content instructor (Roberts 3).

California State University (Dominquez Hills):

A major component of the California State University College program is the "Writing Adjunct" course. In this program, the student is assigned writings from a wide range of subject-area courses. He can meet weekly with either a writing adjunct instructor or a peer tutor to discuss progress. The major objective of the Writing Adjunct program is to train the student to become his own editor. Throughout the term he may observe the actions of the instructors and tutors in the program, and later in the term he takes part in an editing workshop where he acts in the role of a peer tutor (Roberts 3-4).

Ithaca College:

The main feature of the Applied Writing Program at Ithaca College is a series of summer seminars offered to faculty members in various departments (Roberts 4).

School of the Ozarks:

The plan here is to change the two-course freshman English program. Students will take two composition courses, but the second course will be delayed until students are juniors. The feeling is that by then students will have greater maturity and will better recognize the need to write well. They will also be well into their individual disciplines and majors, and writing assignments will be such that they will be writing about their disciplines. Classes will be smaller and will be coordinated with other classes in the student's major (Pfister 4).

Temple University:

In Temple's Freshman Interdisciplinary Studies Program, the students (ranging from remedial to honors level) are invited to join from four to six faculty members for the academic year. These faculty members lead the students in an interdisciplinary group that will undertake a year-long study on a broad topic, such as "Law and Order" or "The Human Condition" or "The Environment." An integral part of the program is the college writing component. The major advantage is that the integrated readings, lectures, and related discussions provide a context for purposeful writing in the coordinated composition classes (Roberts 5).

U.C.L.A.:

U.C.L.A. has a course called "Writing as Problem Solving." A writing workshop is formally conjoined to specific courses on campus. The writing instructor does not assign topics as would teachers in most traditional composition courses: instead, he uses the outlines, rough drafts, and final drafts of the companion course papers. He visits these other classes, surveys

the required texts, and conducts his own workshop to communicate the principles of good writing. These principles are applied directly to the composition papers in the companion course (Moss 188).

Montana State University:

The first two years of the WAC program consisted of workshops and training sessions for non-English faculty in designing and evaluating writing assignments and in investigating the theory and teaching of writing. The English, Marketing and Management, Psychology, and Speech Communication Divisions sponsored a discussion series entitled "Solving the Writing Crisis."

A sophisticated and comprehensive support system for composition soon evolved: The MSU Writing Center, which assumed responsibility for the university-wide writing program.

During the third year they received a federal grant (Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education) with matching University funds. As a result of the grant they have released time to three English faculty to work closely with faculty from other disciplines in the development of reasoning skills and writing components in their classes.

They held a month-long workshop for 35 faculty from across campus. During the school year they conducted two-day workshops for every department on campus. Every degree-granting discipline at Montana State now requires many more writing exercises. Most instructors have been "weaned away from objective tests and quizzes for memory and recitation toward writing to develop and assess higher cognitive processes of learning" (Ferlazzo 5).

Administrators have used numerous public contexts to applaud competent writing as an essential goal of university education. They have also taken more substantive steps: funding the Writing Center and providing financial incentives to faculty. But faculty participation is voluntary (Tchudi 96).

The University of Alabama:

Each undergraduate department selected one full-time faculty member who was teaching a course required for a major or minor to develop a writing requirement for her or his course. Faculty members who agreed to add this designated writing credit to their courses were paid a one-time stipend of $400 and were guaranteed both reduced teaching loads and reduced student loads. In return, they agreed to attend a week-long workshop and incorporate the ideas of that workshop into their syllabi. Workshop participants were guided in preparing sequenced writing assignments for their courses. These assignments encouraged frequent, short writings. Forty faculty members attended the first workshop. As a result, 138 junior and senior courses carry WI (Writing Intensive) credit--with approximately sixty such courses available each quarter. Students are required to take two or three upper level WI courses--at least one of which must be in their major or minor (Silverthorn and Matre).

The University of Massachusetts, Amherst:

Instead of informal faculty workshops, U of Massachusetts has implemented formal changes in the curriculum. In 1984, the six-hour freshman writing requirement was changed to a three-hour freshman writing course and a three-hour junior-level writing course offered by individual departments. This program also features the use of teaching assistants as peer readers to guide students through the writing process ("Writing Across the Curriculum: Issues and Models").

El Paso Community College, Texas:

In the spring of 1985 a group of five faculty members from five different disciplines at El Paso CC met in weekly seminars to address student learning and writing problems. "There was an exciting sharing of ideas on how to deal with these problems. We were invigorated by each other's ideas on teaching. We became familiar with one another's disciplines and the demands of those disciplines. We found that we had common concerns and that our faculty is a talented and enthusiastic faculty. . . . Sharing ideas has many rewards. Teacher burn-out is less likely to strike if we occasionally renew our lights from each other's candles, if we occasionally bask in each other's glow" (Robinson 2).

X. THE STATUS OF WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM IN MICHIGAN COMMUNITY COLLEGES (SPRING 1987)

Below is a list of the twenty-nine Michigan Community Colleges. Student enrollment is provided by the 1987 HEP Higher Education Directory. With each school I have included the name of the person with whom I spoke while gathering information about each school's writing program.

1) ALPENA COMMUNITY COLLEGE (1,878 students)

English Department Chair: Jim Miesen
They had a program three years ago--a series of seminars for faculty in all areas. Faculty were shown how and encouraged to use writing in their teaching. The effect was not lasting. Writing in the content areas is up to the individual professors. Some in the social sciences have kept it up. Most in the other areas dropped the writing emphasis after the first year. The program needed more follow up from the administration, more seminars to keep the interest and development alive. They are planning an honors program that will involve more writing-intensive courses.

2) BAY DE NOC COMMUNITY COLLEGE (1,801 students)

Chair English Department: Larry Leffel
There is no formal program at the present. However, they do have some informal meetings among the English faculty and other disciplines. They have shown all faculty how to use the new MLA style sheet for research papers.

3) C. S. MOTT COMMUNITY COLLEGE (11,158 students)

Language Department Chair: Duane Dorr
They have no formal program in writing across the curriculum and have no plans for anything in the near future.

4) DELTA COLLEGE (10,243 students)

Chair English Department: Don Halog
Writing Across the Curriculum Program is chaired by Larry Levy. Delta has been developing a WAC program for the past two years. They have had Steve Tchudi from MSU teach seminars on their campus in Writing Across the Curriculum. The courses were available for graduate credit and for audit. The first semester twelve people took the course; the second semester 20 people took the course; a third semester is planned for this spring.

In March the WAC proposal was approved by the Board of Trustees. In the future students must satisfactorily complete six semester hours in courses designated as fulfilling the writing requirement.

The writing requirement is this: Each student must take six hours in content-area writing courses. These sections are designated with an asterisk on the schedule of courses each semester. English composition courses may not be used to fulfill the college writing requirement.

5) GLEN OAKS COMMUNITY COLLEGE (1,213 students)

Chair English Department: Tom Soper
They have no program in WAC yet. Daryl Herrmann, the person in charge of their Academic Opportunities Center (remedial), has gone to conferences and is gathering information on Writing Across the Curriculum.

6) GOGEBIC COMMUNITY COLLEGE (1,600 students)

Chair English Department: Dale Johnson
No program in writing across the curriculum. No plans for the near future.

7) GRAND RAPIDS JUNIOR COLLEGE (8,913 students)

Chair Language Arts: Charles Chamberlain
There is no WAC program at present, but they have worked on this from within for the past three years. They have had speakers during in-service days. At present they are trying to form a writing club for all divisions--to include those most interested. People from seven departments have attended four preliminary meetings so far. They are trying to build from within, rather than follow a directive which may be mandated from the president of the college.

8) HENRY FORD COMMUNITY COLLEGE (15,500 student)

Chair English Department: John Pinter
They have no formal program and have no plans for one. They did have a one-day workshop for all faculty between semesters this year. They had Professor Elizabeth Flynn from Michigan Tech speak on "Writing for Learning Across the Curriculum," and they had Dr. Thomas Dunn from U of M, former chair of the Chemistry Department, speak on "Why Should Scientists Use Good English?" (I attended these on 1/27/87.) But there are no plans to follow up or develop a campus-wide program.

9) HIGHLAND PARK COMMUNITY COLLEGE (2,416 students)

English Department: Jenine Kemp
They have no WAC program and have no plans for the near future.

10) JACKSON COMMUNITY COLLEGE (6,074 students)

English Department: Mark Harris
They have nothing going at the present time. However, five years ago they had a graduate credit course offered through EMU in writing across the curriculum. During the fall of '86 they introduced a computer-aided writing program into their learning lab. All students and faculty can use the Lab to work on word processors.

11) KALAMAZOO VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE (8,281 students)

Chair English Department: Bill Lay
They have no program at present but they are planning to do so soon. They expect to start this summer with a seminar on Reading and Writing in Science and Technology--done as an independent studies course.

12) KELLOGG COMMUNITY COLLEGE (4,553 students)

Chair English Department: Bob Lents
They have no WAC program at the present, but they have had a committee working on it for two years. They expect to develop something soon.

13) KIRTLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE (1,333 students)

Chair English Department: Dr. Carl Fernelius
They have no WAC program at present. They have had some discussions on the topic. They do encourage other areas to use more writing and more essay exams.

14) LAKE MICHIGAN COLLEGE (3,199 students)

Chair Humanities and Fine Arts Department: Joel Zienty
They have no WAC program at present, but they have plans for the future. Last year they went through the process of changing freshman composition to a two semester sequence. The next step is to develop writing courses in the elective course area--to be required as part of the graduation requirement.

15) LANSING COMMUNITY COLLEGE (19,157 students)

Chair Communications Department: Dr. George Bramer
They have no WAC program at present, but they may have one soon. They have done some professional development in-service workshops on WAC. They did a survey of faculty to target areas of interest. A committee is being formed in the Communications Department to plan future WAC activities.

16) MACOMB COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE (30,892 students)

Chairman of the Committee to Develop Writing Across the Curriculum Programs: Dennis Thompson, Center Campus
Dennis Thompson has had released time this semester to develop a proposal for developing a WAC program. He will present his recommendations in April. He expects it to include conferences led by outside speakers. He will act as a clearing house for articles related to various disciplines.

17) MID-MICHIGAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE (1,761 students)

Chair English Department: David Thompson
They have no WAC program at present. They are having discussions and hope to develop something in the near future.

18) MONROE COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE (2,880 students)

Chair English Department: Audrey Warrick
There is no WAC program at present. However, the college has shown an interest in developing a program. There has been one meeting with people from all the divisions to discuss the possible approaches that might be taken.

19) MONTCALM COMMUNITY COLLEGE (1,398 students)

Chair English Department: John Pastoor
They have no WAC program at present. They have talked about it. John feels it will not develop because the administration's heart is not in it. "They are all anxious to build writing literacy, but they do very little to assure quality. They hire too many part-time instructors. They first need to take some steps to regulate the great variety of ways their freshman composition courses are taught."

20) MUSKEGON COMMUNITY COLLEGE (4,623 students)

Head of the Writing Across the Curriculum Committee: Kerrill O'Connell
They have no program at present. Kerrill O'Connell has tried for three years to get the school to do something with it. She has given workshops on campus. But the school has not given released time for these activities, and she has found that she cannot do this and teach a full load. She feels it has great potential, but without greater commitment from the college there is not much hope for a viable program.

21) NORTH CENTRAL MICHIGAN COLLEGE (1,692 students)

English Professor: Richard Hruska
They have no WAC program at present. They have talked about it. Professor Hruska has attended a conference on WAC. There has not been much encouragement or commitment from the administration at the present.

22) NORTHWESTERN MICHIGAN COLLEGE (3,222 students)

Department Chair Communication Division: Al Shumsky
They began a program about three years ago. Dan Fader from U of M began with an introduction to the topic. This was followed with a two-day workshop. They have had once-a-term informal meetings with all interested faculty. This year they have started a writing center which uses students as peer readers to comment on and help students with papers they are developing for all of their courses. They also have an honors program in which the students do more writing projects and more research than would normally be required.

23) OAKLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE (26,605 students)

Chair of the Writing Across the Curriculum Committee: Dean Johanna Kobran, Auburn Hills Campus
Dean Kobran is working with the people at Madonna College to develop a program for Oakland Community College. They have no program at present, but expect to have one soon.

24) SCHOOLCRAFT COLLEGE (8,512 students)

Assistant Dean of Liberal Arts: Larry Ordowski

They have no WAC program at present, but they hope to have one soon. They are working with the leaders at Madonna College and Michigan Tech to develop a program.

25) SOUTHWESTERN MICHIGAN COLLEGE (2,365 students)

Chair English Department: Dr. William Tomory
They have no WAC program. There has been some discussion, but no plans exist for any developments in the near future.

26) ST. CLAIR COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE (3,885 students)

English Chair: Marge F. Boal
They had a WAC program about five years ago. It is rather inactive at the present. They had Dan Fader and Barbara Morris from U of M to present an all-day seminar. They revised their admissions testing to make it mandatory to take remedial English classes if scores were below a certain level. The U of M group helped set this up and get it passed by the Board of Trustees. The only interdisciplinary activities in recent months have been some seminars for people in other departments on the use of the new MLA style for research papers. They also provide handbooks to faculty in other departments who request them.

27) WASHTENAW COMMUNITY COLLEGE (7,858 students)

Chair of English Instructional Laboratory: Ms. Ruth Hatcher
There is no WAC program at present. There has been some discussion. Present efforts are directed at basic skills placement. A one-hour writing lab is a requirement at Washtenaw, in addition to the other composition classes. The lab is open to all students.

28) WAYNE COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE (12,505 students)

Chair English Department: Cheryl Krakow
There is no WAC program at the present, but they are making plans. Art Young from Michigan Tech presented an all-day workshop on March 10, 1987. From this they hope to develop a wider program for the future.

29) WEST SHORE COMMUNITY COLLEGE (1,083 students)

Communications Department Chair: Rosemary St. Johns
There is no WAC program at present. There has been some discussion but no plans exist at this time.

WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM IN MICHIGAN COMMUNITY COLLEGES
Spring, 1987

TWO Michigan Community Colleges are actively involved with an interdisciplinary writing program: Delta College and Northwestern Michigan College.

THREE Michigan Community Colleges have had an active interdisciplinary program in the past, but little is being done at the present: Alpena Community College, Jackson Community College, and St. Clair County Community College.

TEN of Michigan Community Colleges feel that they are close to presenting a program but are now in the planning stages: Grand Rapids Junior College, Kalamazoo Valley Community College, Lake Michigan College, Lansing Community College, Macomb County Community College, Monroe County Community College, Oakland Community College, Schoolcraft College, Wayne County Community College

SIX of Michigan Community Colleges are having some preliminary discussions but still have no plans for interdisciplinary writing programs: Bay de Noc Community College, Glenn Oaks Community College, Henry Ford Community College, Kirtland Community College, Mid-Michigan Community College, Muskegon Community College.

EIGHT Michigan Community Colleges have no program in interdisciplinary writing programs and have no plans to develop one soon: C. S. Mott Community College, Gogebic Community College, Highland Park Community College, Montcalm Community College, North Central Michigan College, Southwestern Michigan College, Washtenaw Community College, West Shore Community College.

XI. OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO MONROE COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE IF IT CHOOSES TO DEVELOP AN INTERDISCIPLINARY WRITING PROJECT

In light of these survey results and as a result of the research I have conducted, I have reached some tentative conclusions about the options Monroe County Community College may wish to consider regarding interdisciplinary writing programs.

I. The first option is to stay with the status quo.

If we make no changes, we will be among the majority of community colleges--in Michigan and around the country. A few have already made brief attempts in this area and have seen their efforts gradually become nothing more than a memory of a valiant but vain effort that could not sustain itself after the initial "conversion experience" had worn off. Most have not yet begun an interdisciplinary writing program--and many of these indicate they have no plans to begin one any time soon.

There is no shame in this approach. We have an excellent faculty and, as Part Two of my survey indicates, our students are already required to write, at least some of the time, in most of their courses. Therefore, if we choose to make no change at all, we will not be going against any overwhelming force for change.

Furthermore, although I hesitate to even mention them because of what they may imply, I feel obligated to point out a couple of other observations that have struck me about the successful interdisciplinary writing programs I have encountered in my study. To anyone who has read the rest of this report, the first observation is probably already all too clear:

1) A truly successful program takes a lot of work, a long range commitment from faculty and administration, and it takes money. Most of the programs that are now well-established were begun with rather substantial endowments from either government or private foundations.

My second observation is not as obvious, but its implications are even more ominous:

2) In our state, the only successful community college programs that have survived for more than a short time, that show signs of being able to sustain themselves and have a lasting impact on their institutions are on campuses where the faculty do not belong to a union. Delta College and Northwestern Michigan College have probably the most active efforts now in progress among Michigan community colleges--both are non-union two-year colleges. Perhaps this is only a coincidence, and no one can predict how effective their efforts may prove in the long run. But one can speculate that the lack of a union contract and the resulting need to become involved with non-contractual obligations may just provide the crucial incentive needed to get and keep faculty involved in this or any other interdisciplinary project.

(And by the way, while I am making observations, let me say that I have also come to the conclusion that those who have established interdisciplinary writing programs almost always seek opportunities to publish articles about their efforts or deliver papers at the meetings of state and national organizations--a perfectly natural and admirable response. But, when we read and hear so often about writing across the curriculum, we might naturally assume we are seeing only the tip of the iceberg--when in fact there is no iceberg at all, and what we have seen is exactly and entirely what there is.)

II. **The second option we might wish to pursue is the establishment of a writing center**--perhaps as a part of or as an extension to the present Learning Assistance Lab.

This form of collaborative learning has found many able supporters in recent years and is an increasingly popular approach to addressing writing in all areas of the curriculum. This is not the same as a remedial writing center. It is a writing center staffed with faculty or peer readers or some combination of the two.

It is most emphatically not an editing service--a place where students drop by to have someone tell them where to put in the commas. Students and staff are trained to serve as an attentive audience and to deal with the larger issues of critical thinking, organization, clarity, and support.

It exists to serve students of all abilities and to help them get the most out of every college writing experience. With a Writing Center available, faculty commonly require students to take all major writing assignments to the Writing Center for a first reading. This first draft is later attached to the final draft. Thus, without adding to the instructor's workload, students receive guidance during the writing process--when it is most helpful and most needed. Most faculty are pleased to know their students are receiving guidance during the formative stages of their work, and they are encouraged to see that each paper has gone through at least two drafts--and if the effort is still deficient, they can send the student back to the Writing Center for any number of drafts before giving the paper its final evaluation, each time giving the student a chance to learn and improve before closure comes in the form of a final grade on the paper.

III. The third option we might wish to pursue is to establish a series of workshops devoted to strategies for improving writing across the curriculum.

These workshops would be led by consultants hired from nearby universities.

These are usually intensive all-day sessions. Ideally they run for several consecutive days--and are often conducted during the summer vacation periods. Since such a large time-block is seldom available during the school year, and since faculty are reluctant to relinquish a large portion of their vacation time, workshops are sometimes held on scheduled faculty workdays or on weekends during the school year. Participation is almost never required of faculty, and incentives are often provided to encourage faculty participation. Incentives may come in the form of released time or extra-contractual pay. Another incentive commonly used is to make the workshops part of a college course offered for graduate credit through a neighboring university. (Part-time faculty are invited and encouraged to attend but are seldom provided any monetary incentives.)

Since participation in the workshops alone provides no assurance that faculty will actually make an effort to incorporate writing into their courses, some schools give the faculty one released class each semester while the workshops are being conducted, and, in return, the faculty agree to prepare a revised syllabus for one or two classes and further agree to use these techniques for at least one semester.

Furthermore, after the workshops have been completed and enough faculty have revised their course outlines to include a significant emphasis on writing-to-learn, several schools have then designated these courses as writing-intensive and require all graduates to take at least six hours of these writing-intensive courses before graduating. (This is the approach Delta College has just adopted.)

IV. A fourth option we may wish to consider would be an effort to build a series of team-taught courses or courses with co-registration.

In co-registered courses, students who sign up for a content-area course are also assigned to a particular composition course. The instructors of both courses work together to coordinate assignments, and all written work is evaluated by both faculty members.

V. A fifth option would be to combine some or all of the approaches listed above.

XII. RECOMMENDATIONS:

If Monroe County Community College were to develop an emphais on writing-to-learn across the curriculum, I would recommend the following steps as a necessary part of successfully implementing that emphasis:

1) Establish a project steering committee--the writing advisory board.

Ideally, this advisory board would consist of at least one volunteer member from each department. (However, I see no advantage in restricting its membership. It seems reasonable to me that, in addition to the committee members designated as representatives from each department, any faculty member, part-time as well as full-time, who wishes to participate could be an ad hoc member of the Writing Advisory Board.) Nevertheless, whatever the final membership may be, all campus-wide efforts to enhance the quality of student writing would be directed by this board. (More importantly, if a Writing Center were to be established, this board would develop the policies and procedures for implementing its services: which might include designing and/or approving a training program and creating a handbook for the staff and student employees.)

With this in mind, I want to make it abundantly clear that **any recommendations I make beyond this point would be implemented only with the approval of the Writing Advisory Board** and by whatever methods they decide would be most beneficial.

Since a number of these steps will require financial support, the administration will undoubtedly need to make two important commitments if it chooses to begin an interdisciplinary writing project. If workshops are going to be offered, faculty must be given incentives either in the form of released time or extra pay, and the Writing Advisory Board must, from its inception, be given an adequate budget with which to work.

The start-up costs for the first year or two are likely to be considerably higher than in future years. If the Writing Advisory Board decides it is appropriate, the first year would probably include several all-day workshops for interested faculty and establishment of a writing support system to be centered in the LAL Writing Center. After the initial training period has been completed, future costs might include one or two workshops each year to serve new faculty and provide a refresher course for former participants. And, of course, funding will also be needed to staff and administer an effective Writing Center.

If the Writing Advisory Board were to approve the proposal I will outline for the first year, it would include these things: 1) consultants' fees and travel expenses for those hired to lead several all-day workshops; 2) faculty incentives of released time or extra-contractual pay--this will depend on the level of faculty participation; 3) training costs of peer tutors for the LAL Writing Center; 4) salary for increased use of peer tutors in the LAL Writing Center. (This may include work-study funds.)

Whatever the actual budget may prove to be, one can see that the establishment of a viable writing project will require a substantial commitment from the administration as well as from the faculty. There are, of course, a number of other approaches that may be taken, and the ultimate decision must be made by the administration and/or the Writing Advisory Board; however, I, for one, will choose not to be part of an ineffective, poorly supported program. I have already talked to too many disheartened, disillusioned people who were part of such failed programs. If an interdisciplinary writing program is to create anything more than an illusion of interest in excellence, the college must provide incentives for faculty participation and a support system for long-term faculty and student participation.

Kathleen O'Dowd, director of Madonna College's writing project, put it this way:

There is at least one minimum requirement which every program must have: The minimum requirement is funding.

> This is not as ludicrously obvious as it seems at first. I have talked with administrators who were very aware of the need for a writing program, very interested in having one but who seemed to be nurturing the unspoken hope that their faculty, if exposed via a workshop to the concepts and methods being developed at other colleges, would adapt and utilize them on their own. Thus, a sort of **ipso facto**, 'grass roots' program would emerge. Such hopes are, unfortunately, unrealistic. . . . Any dedicated, conscientious teacher with three or four classes to teach has his hands full just doing as effectively as possible what he already knows how to do. . . . Change is always difficult. Above all it takes time. No matter how unsatisfactory or uncomfortable the present system may be, or how we grumble about its inadequacies, it often seems better to bear the ills we have than fly to others that we know not of. Faculty willing to commit themselves to a WAC program cannot be spared the discomfort or inconveniences such change entails. But they **must** be given the time required to effect it: time in which to read; time to refine, adapt and practice using methodology; time to revise individual courses or curriculum requirements to reflect it; time to try it out, to make mistakes, to refine it and make it their own. And time, as they say, is money. Thus, at the very minimum, sufficient funds must be available to provide enough released time for the WAC faculty and administrators to realize their goals. . . . Funds also will be needed for experienced consultants. . . .

> Incidental costs for supplies, materials, and necessary secretarial help will be inevitable but basically insignificant. These are, it seems to me, the **sine qua non** of any program. (O'Dowd 7)

My proposal calls for a two-stage approach.

I. **The first, and to my mind the most important, part of the Monroe County Community College writing project would include a strong emphasis on building a writing center to support all campus writing activities.**

Use of the Writing Center would be open to every faculty member and every student on campus. All faculty would be encouraged to require students to submit writing assignments for a first reading by peer readers in the Writing Center.

Peer Readers would include full-time faculty who have been granted released time to work in the Writing Center and students with a superior academic record who have been recommended for this position and have been screened, trained, and monitored by the director of the Writing Center. Student tutors would be paid to attend a training session at the beginning of each semester and would attend at least one refresher training session during the semester.

This is an absolutely essential part of any long-range effort to instill writing across the curriculum. It is the surest way to maintain faculty participation. An effective, well-staffed writing center can provide feedback during the writing process when the student needs help the most. At the same time it adds no great demands on faculty time during this important but time-consuming stage in the writing process.

> It increases the amount of writing that students do without increasing the number of papers that faculty grade, and so it allows faculty within any discipline to emphasize writing without becoming writing teachers themselves. When faculty participating in the

> program receive student papers, they can be assured that these essays were revised at least once. . . . Furthermore, the program makes writing an active concern of the entire academic community. . . . Finally it demonstrates that some students do write well and care about helping others learn to write--not all students are like those profiled in articles on declining literacy. (Haring-Smith)

Many such writing centers have been established in the past ten years. Through this part of the writing-across-the-curriculum program, students acquire a crucial skill: the ability to improve their writing by revising it with the help of a colleague or editor.

But let me emphasize once again what the writing center is **not** intended to be and should never be allowed to become: It is **not** an editing service. The peer tutors are **not** there to proofread and rewrite the papers of weaker students. A well-designed and properly supervised program can assure that these goals are not compromised. In fact, as I have already indicated, many writing centers include faculty among the Writing Center staff. These schools allow faculty one released class each semester, and in return the faculty spend about seven hours a week working in the Writing Center. These are not just composition teachers. Teachers from all across the curriculum would benefit from such an experience.

II. The second stage of my proposal would include an entirely voluntary program of staff development.

We would offer a series of writing-to-learn workshops taught by hired consultants.

Faculty would probably be given three choices: 1) they could choose not to participate in any way; 2) they might choose to attend any of the individual sessions as they wish; 3) they might choose to become a fully participating member of the interdisciplinary writing project, and if they did, they would sign up for all the programs in advance.

Faculty who choose to become a part of the interdisciplinary writing project would be given one released class for the fall and winter term. In return for this released time (or one class extra-contractual pay) they would agree to: a) attend several all-day workshops (the time, place, and agenda to be determined by the Writing Advisory Board)--pay would be prorated on attendance. In addition to participating in these workshops, faculty would agree to spend three hours a week in the Writing Center serving as tutors and models for peer editors and becoming thoroughly familiar with the ways of the Writing Center. Participants would also agree to develop two new course syllabi during each of the two semesters--these would include newly-developed writing components, specific teaching techniques and writing assignments which include writing-to-learn approaches. Participating faculty would agree to incorporate these approaches for at least one semester in each newly-designed course.

Conclusion:

Of course, as I have already indicated, we may honorably choose to do nothing more than the good job we are already doing. Or we might choose only one of the two steps I have proposed: workshops or writing center. (If we were to choose only one, I would strongly encourage that it should be the writing center.) Or we can simply form a Writing Advisory Board and let them decide where to go from here.

APPENDIX A

PARADIGM SHIFT IN WRITING THEORY AND PRACTICE
(Information synthesized by Dennis Thompson, Macomb Community College)

		Traditional	New
1.	Relationship of writing to learning	Writing demonstrates what has been learned	Writing is a method of learning as well as a method of demonstrating what has been learned.
2.	Writing model	Think; then write	Thinking and writing are interrelated.
3.	Major emphasis	Product	Process
4.	Types of writing	Description Narration Exposition Argumentation	Expressive (personal) Transactional (public, i.e., traditional nonfiction types) Poetic (e.g., poems, short stories, etc.)
5.	Audience	Teacher as judge	Self Peers Designated (e.g., official, editor, angry customer) Teacher as interested friend Teacher as judge
6.	Formats	Essays Test questions Assignments (e.g., book reviews and case studies Lab reports Research papers	Essays Test questions Assignments (e.g., book reviews and case studies) Lab reports Research papers Journals
7.	Frequency	One--three times per semester	Every class
8.	Type of evaluation	Primarily negative criticism by teacher on final drafts	Positive and negative criticism by writers, peers, and teacher on several stages of the writing process
9.	Importance of grammar, spelling, and punctuation	Very important on all assigned papers	Important only on final drafts; of minor importance on preliminary drafts; unimportant for journals
10.	How to achieve competence	One college English course should suffice	Much practice in different academic settings is required

APPENDIX B

Three weeks after I submitted this paper, College Composition and Communication published an article by David R. Russell: "Writing Across the Curriculum and the Communication Movement: Some Lessons from the Past." The results of Russell's research are extremely relevant to my report. I think we should consider his remarks before making a final decision about a WAC program at Monroe County Community College. Thus, I will conclude my report by presenting a brief summary of this article.

Several decades ago writing-across-the-curriculum programs were instituted at Colgate and at the University of California at Berkeley. These efforts were remarkably similar to the recent WAC efforts. The Colgate program lasted from 1949-1961, and the Berkeley program lasted from 1950-1965. Both were clearly not remedial and not "grammar-across-the curriculum" programs. Both tried to emphasize writing to learn. They were "consciously collegial" and attempted to "draw faculty and students into an intellectual community" (187).

"What happened to these programs? Despite their high aims and long successes, both died out in the early sixties. They were victims of the compartmentalized structure of academia and the entrenched attitudes in the university both toward writing and toward interdepartmental programs" (190).

Russell has carefully documented the rise and fall of each program, and he concludes that "these programs failed not because they lacked substance, but because they could not overcome the very obstacles which WAC programs are facing today" (184). Russell concludes that it is extremely difficult to change faculty attitudes toward writing instruction. "Despite strong administrative support and an enthusiastic core of faculty members, the Colgate and Berkeley programs were unable to integrate writing into the

organizational structure of the university to the extent that cross-curricular instruction became self-sustaining, independent of the dynamic personalities who began the programs" (184-85).

Russell sees three requirements as absolutely necessary for a successful WAC program:

> WAC programs must be woven so tightly into the fabric of the institution as to resist the subtle unraveling effect of academic politics. . . .
>
> First, WAC must be part of an institution-wide plan, with realistic goals and clear steps marked out toward them. Revival meetings or consciousness-raising efforts, however useful as springboards, cannot sustain interest after founders have gone. Second, programs require funding (large amounts of it, usually separate funding) to purchase faculty time dedicated exclusively to WAC and to guarantee reasonable class sizes--the **sine qua non** of writing-to-learn. . . . Finally, WAC programs require patience. Ten--or thirty--years may not be enough to change century-old university priorities and classroom practices, and if WAC program directors depend on yearly funding from an English department (as at Colgate) or from an ad hoc faculty committee (as at Berkeley), the slow effects of institutional inertia will take their toll. Programs must have time (and therefore hard money) to bring about the gradual transformation in attitudes necessary to make WAC a tradition instead of a trend. (191)

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NOV 18 1988